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THE FUTURE

MEETING PRIORITIES SHARING BENEFITS

Budget 2001

THIRD QUARTER ACTIVITY REPORT

2001-02 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

FOR RELEASE FEBRUARY 27, 2002

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

Updating Albertans

Four times a year the Government of Alberta produces fiscal updates on how much it is earning, spending, and investing on behalf of Albertans. It's an additional way the provincial government fulfills its promise to be accountable to Albertans. But, there is more to accountability than numbers, economic indicators, and financial tables.

These Quarterly Activity Reports are designed to give Albertans details on where the money goes. Each is a list of some of the most important and interesting achievements and initiatives recognized, initiated, or accomplished by the government during each quarter of the 2001-02 fiscal year. The Third Quarter Activity Report covers October, November and December of 2001.

The public employees of the Alberta Government are responsible for getting many of these initiatives off the ground and maintaining them with a standard of excellence second to none. The number of accomplishments may be significant, but it's the quality and variety that this government is most proud of.

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LISTENING TO ALBERTANS

The Alberta Government is committed to listening to Albertans and has a proven track record of acting on what it has heard. For instance, the government provides Albertans with information about Alberta's largest investment, the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust, during annual public information sessions.

Through various forms of communication such as: public consultation, surveys, letters, phone calls, E-mails, and many other methods, the Government heard from the people of Alberta. It's through this input that many changes are initiated and new policies are formed. For example, after listening to Albertans about their concerns over recreational hunting of coyotes using dogs, amendments were made so that livestock producers can now use dogs only after they prove coyotes have attacked their livestock.

In the Third Quarter, the Government also heard from Albertans as it:

- **held** public consultations with over 4,000 Albertans in preparation for the Alberta Future Summit 2002. Over 2,300 workbooks were submitted either in hard copy or on-line. A total of 805 Albertans participated in 11 regional forums at nine locations across the province and approximately 1,000 Albertans participated in meetings held by Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's).

- **held** the first Minister's Symposium on Schools to gather innovative ideas on building and operating schools in the future.

- **solicited** input to the Alberta Future Summit 2002 from delegates at the fall conventions of both the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties.

- **assembled** a focus group that consisted of Aboriginal leaders, youth, seniors and others, to prepare for Alberta Future Summit 2002.

- **received** the report completed by the Chisholm Fire Review Committee regarding the Chisholm fire, and accepted all of the committee's recommendations.

- **facilitated** 11 regional forums in nine Alberta centres (Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Peace River, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Vermilion and Fort McMurray) as part of the Alberta Future Summit 2002 consultation process.

- **participated** in the Travel Alberta Fall Industry Conference - Tourism Together.

- **hosted** public meetings regarding the coordination of recreational and industrial development activities in the resource-rich Bighorn region.

- **launched** a survey targeted to Alberta employers to determine how the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission can better serve their needs for human rights information, resources, or programs.

- **obtained** feedback from key stakeholder groups on healthy aging and seniors' wellness through a one-day Healthy Aging Forum.

- **launched** a review of the *Blind Persons' Rights Act* and the Guide Dog Qualifications Regulations. The review focuses on protecting persons with disabilities who use assistive animals.

- **continued** to work with water users and extended the Bow River's water operations season by two weeks to improve reservoir storage levels for the winter and to ensure that any impact on the aquatic ecosystem was minimized.

- **led** consultations to identify the benefits of expanding mediation in our civil courts and the challenges to be faced. The recommendations will be used to develop "made-in-Alberta" programs that will improve access to justice.

- **presented** recommendations on the environmental status of the Oldman Dam to southern Albertans at a series of open houses.

- **implemented** the new Parking Placards for Persons with Disabilities Policy. Policy highlights include: new eligibility criteria and additional approval authorities to ensure those with the greatest needs have access to designated parking.

- **participated** in meetings at the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association conference. Approximately 17 municipalities met with government employees to obtain information and voice concern about the department's activities, including water-related issues.

- **announced** the results of the Gaming Licensing Policy Review after 20 months of consultation with stakeholders.

- **provided** advice and information on registries, landlord-tenant matters and consumer issues to more than 45,000 Albertans through a toll-free call centre.

- **held** meetings with 600 southern Alberta producers and producer organizations to obtain their input on crop insurance program changes or inform those who have suffered from recent drought conditions of the financial assistance available under the Farm Income Disaster Program.

- **consulted** with more than 1,000 Albertans about a proposal to regulate the travel club industry under the Fair Trading Act, Alberta's consumer protection legislation. The opinions of both business and consumers will help ensure any new regulation is fair and effective.

- **held** roundtable meetings with east central Alberta producers to obtain input on improving Agriculture Financial Services Corporation's financial programs and services.

- **conducted** roundtable sessions with stakeholders to develop performance measures and outcomes that will form an accountability framework for the Workers' Compensation system.

- **enhanced** the Beginning Farmer Program, reducing short-term interest rates, and shortened loan turnaround time.

- **published** Minerals Rights Information Bulletin 2001-2002 outlining all the tenure changes resulting from consultations with industry over the past two years.

- **consulted** with Albertans with disabilities, staff and service providers to identify measures of success for persons with disabilities who participate in labour market programming.

- **held** the 5th annual Online Learning Symposium in Edmonton. The symposium was Canada's largest e-learning conference. More than 650 educators and leaders in e-learning gathered to examine the emerging trends and recent developments in online learning and virtual education for students from kindergarten to post-secondary.

- **consulted** with industry and stakeholders on Confined Feeding Operation legislation as well as regulations and standards.

- **released** the Second Quarter Update for the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

- **presented** Waterworks seminars in Stony Plain and Edson. The seminars provided information on the provincial regulatory framework and enforcement program as related to the municipal wastewater and potable water treatment systems. Virtually all North Eastern Slope municipalities were represented at the seminars.

STRENGTHENING THE ALBERTA ECONOMY

Albertans benefit from having a strong, healthy economy. This year the Government estimates Alberta's economy will lead the nation in growth, and will create more than 40,000 new jobs. We also have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada.

This Quarter the Government of Alberta launched a "Scratch N Win" lottery ticket to benefit the province's two NHL teams. This initiative recognizes that the teams provide a tremendous economic benefit to the province. The province also approved the drilling of nearly 500 new oil and gas wells.

Our Government undertook many actions to strengthen the Alberta economy. In the Third Quarter it:

- **announced** details of corrective actions by the Government of Alberta, in response to the global economic slowdown accelerated by the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.
- **increased** the personal tax exemption from $12,900 to $13,339. Under Alberta's single rate tax plan, bracket creep is eliminated through the indexation of non-refundable tax credits.
- **facilitated** the development of 336 megawatts of new electricity generation.
- **approved** EPCOR's application for a 490-megawatt expansion at its existing coal-fired Genesee power plant after review by the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board.
- **entered** into a five-year agreement with Princeton University to study ways of sequestering carbon dioxide using Alberta's extensive geological data about oil and gas pools.
- **approved** AES Calgary's application to build a 525 megawatt natural gas-fired power plant east of Calgary after review by the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board.
- **began** a multi-stakeholder initiative to review and quantify the benefits of sour gas development to communities.
- **approved** ATCO Gas North's revised sale conditions for its Viking-Kinsella natural gas production facilities.
- **completed** $31.2 million in land sales and unconditional offers and signed $7 million in conditional offers.

- **signed** a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Canada and the University of Alberta to ensure close cooperation and co-ordination between all parties in establishing the $120 million National Institute for Nanotechnology at the University of Alberta.

- **launched** a new web site to provide online public access to information on the sale of surplus government items throughout Alberta.

- **sponsored** the Greater Edmonton Biotechnology, Biomedicine and eHealth Investor Forum. The Investor Forum provided Biotechnology companies from around the province the chance to seek global capital.

- **played** a lead role in the planning, organizing, and hosting of the Northern Forum General Assembly in Edmonton.

- **promoted** the Alberta Advantage and created awareness about the province's growing knowledge economy at Comdex 2001 in Las Vegas. The Comdex fall trade show is the largest computer show in North America, commonly attended by all major IT companies.

- **assisted** the Lac Cardinal Economic Development Board with the coordination of a workshop regarding non-energy mineral exploration in northern Alberta.

- **participated** in the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders (FPTA) meetings in Ottawa, and reaffirmed a commitment to strengthening Aboriginal Participation in the Economy and increasing opportunities for Aboriginal youth.

- **approved** more than $3.2 million in funding through the Alberta Film Development Program to Alberta filmmakers, and in excess of $4 million in grants to individuals and organizations in Alberta's arts sector through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

- **issued** 125 approvals for emergency water supplies to agricultural clients in the North Eastern Slopes region. These "emergency" approvals are offered as assistance to affected agricultural sectors.

- **participated** as a member of the Canadian delegation at the fourth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference where negotiations commenced in areas such as agriculture, services, trade remedy laws and improvements to the WTO dispute resolution mechanism.

- **completed** the first phase of a water management plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin.

- **continued** a strong defence of Alberta's forestry practices in response to U.S. softwood lumber trade action. This reinforced Alberta's priorities in settling the dispute with the U.S. softwood lumber representative.

- **coordinated** the investment attraction program for the Team Canada West mission to Los Angeles, Dallas and Houston in November. This mission provided the opportunity to profile Alberta as an attractive investment destination, particularly in the energy sector.

- **implemented** a new provincial regulation governing online shopping. The Internet Sales Contract Regulation extends more protection to consumers and establishes consistent rules for Internet sellers.

- **coordinated** a study tour on Alberta's agriculture system for leaders from Ukraine.

- **assumed** responsibility for the monitoring, siting and enforcing of Confined Feeding Operations, formerly known as intensive livestock operations, through amendments made to the Agricultural Operation Practices Act.

- **sponsored** the Alberta Call Centre Association conference, which focused on new tools and technologies to serve the needs of the call centre industry and improve customer service.

- **released** the Prepared for Growth report, which outlines three key strategies for addressing labour force development by increasing the skill and knowledge of Albertans, the mobility of labour from across Canada and the number of skilled immigrants coming to Alberta.

- **paid** out $32 million to about 1,100 applicants for the 2000 claim year through the Farm Income Disaster Program and Canadian Farm Income Program.

- **maintained** our commitment to Albertans to be open and accountable about Alberta's fiscal and economic position by releasing our Second Quarter Fiscal Update in November.

- **authorized** approximately $32.5 million for Agriculture Financial Services Corporation's Beginning Farmer, Developing Farmer, and Disaster loans to farmers and commercial loans to agri-businesses.

- **provided** third party mediation to ensure that Alberta maintained one of the lowest rate of person-days lost to strikes and lockouts in the country.

- **paid** Alberta farmers approximately $126.5 million for Agriculture Financial Services Corporation's Crop Insurance, native pasture, straight hail and wildlife compensation claims.

- **provided** an integrated rig-hand training program through Petroleum Industry Training Services and Portage College.

- **negotiated** the terms of an agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Federal Government) regarding the implementation of the Provincial Nominee Program. This mechanism will allow Alberta to selectively expedite the immigration process to address some of the skilled worker shortages faced by various industries in the province.

- **developed** a training course with local businesses for shippers and receivers in Lloydminster. These businesses are developing the curriculum - computer skills required, inventory control, customer relations - and providing work experience for the participants.

- **continued** to move towards compliance with the terms of Chapter 7 (Labour Mobility) of the Agreement on Internal Trade. To date, 46 of 51 Alberta regulatory bodies have developed agreements to facilitate the movement of qualified workers across provincial and territorial boundaries.

- **developed** a consolidated Land Agents Licensing Regulation, which will govern the licensing, regulation, and conduct of the province's 1,200 registered land agents.

- **transferred** secondary highways and certain primary highways in cities to the province. The Government is now responsible for all construction, maintenance and rehabilitation on these roadways, freeing about $85 million per year for rural municipalities and $22 million for cities. The Premier's Task Force on Infrastructure recommended the transfer of these highways to provincial jurisdiction.

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The state of Alberta's health care system is a concern for all Albertans. That is why the Alberta Government continues to search for innovative ideas and initiatives to improve the sustainability of the health system and reassure Albertans that their needs are being met.

In the Third Quarter, the Government continued to focus on the health of Albertans as it:

- **released** the third quarter Air Quality Monitoring Report. The report shows Albertans continue to enjoy good air quality with the highest possible rating 93 per cent of the time.

- **conducted** indoor air quality tests in Edmonton and Calgary court facilities to ensure that judges, staff and the public have healthy working conditions through acceptable air quality.

- **offered** a new vaccine against meningococcal serogroup C that is safe for children under two years and provides long-lasting protection. Regional health authorities began vaccinating infants and toddlers, age two months to 24 months in November.

- **launched** the Calgary Diversion Project, which allows mentally-ill Albertans who commit minor offences to be deferred into care instead of serving jail time. The initiative is funded by a $1.4 million grant from the ministry's Health Innovation Fund, and is led by the Alberta Mental Health Board. The project is expected to help 300 people in the Calgary region.

- **proclaimed** the Charitable Donation of Food Act, which protects donors, volunteers and workers, who help provide for those in need from unfair legal action.

- **provided** an additional $6.7 million to 14 previously funded projects through the Healthy Aging Partnership Initiative (HAPI). This will assist 554 additional supportive housing units to be developed.

- **co-funded** the Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience at the University of Lethbridge.

- **participated** with provincial and federal departments and Aboriginal organizations in the planning of a conference to be held in February 2002 entitled, Lifting the Silence on Suicide - Together We Can Make a Difference.

- **embarked** upon a program requiring continuous chlorination of all public drinking water supplies. All municipalities were notified to implement continuous chlorination to minimize the risk of bacterial contamination.

- **worked** with other provinces on a coordinated effort to communicate to Canadians the need for greater provincial flexibility in health program delivery, and greater federal contributions to health care.

- **began** the "Collision Prime Time" program to promote safe driving behaviors through radio advertising. The ads will focus on common driving behaviors associated with collisions.

- **provided** Albertans with the opportunity to elect representatives to the province's regional health authority boards. Eighty-two candidates were elected in 16 regions.

- **launched** the annual "Practice Snow Plough Know How" campaign in December. The campaign raises awareness of winter highway maintenance activities and promotes motorist safety during these activities.

- **launched** an information initiative entitled Alberta: Health First to help Albertans assess the debate on health care and future government action. Facts on the issues facing health care are available in a tabloid-style publication from the Internet or by mail, and the publication is supported by print and broadcast advertising.

SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The Alberta Government promotes the idea of lifelong learning by encouraging Albertans to continue their education beyond high school and post-secondary.

Alberta's commitment to the idea that everyone should have access to a variety of learning opportunities ensures that our province's workers are among the best educated in the country.

Alberta is a leader in high-tech research in the health sector and engineering. Our educational institutions have some of the most highly trained and qualified researchers in the world.

An important part of a solid education system is a diverse range of education programs. In Alberta, we offer numerous programs through various partnerships with industry and the private sector.

The provincial government supported initiatives that ensure Albertans will continue to be leaders as it:

- **awarded** $20,000 worth of individual Persons Case Scholarships, ranging between $1,000 and $3,000, to nine Alberta students. The awards are available to individuals who ultimately contribute to the advancement of women, or who are studying in fields where members of their gender are traditionally few in number.

- **announced** that 50 first-year apprentices from across the province were the inaugural recipients of $1000 scholarships recognizing participants in the province's innovative Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP).

- **launched** a public awareness campaign for Science and Technology Week 2001, which celebrated Alberta's success as a leader in innovation. A key component of the campaign encouraged school-aged children to consider careers in science, research, and technology.

- **funded** several projects under the Northern LINKS Program with the goal to assist northern Alberta students make decisions related to the transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

- **hosted** the Youth Eco-Forum in Edmonton. Delegates from around the world attended the three-day forum to learn and exchange information about common environmental issues concerning waste, energy, and protected areas.

- **coordinated** several studies under the Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse Project, an initiative based on a partnership with five northern colleges. The studies will link employment demands in northern Alberta with post-secondary education.

- **participated** in organizing the Northern Alberta Human Resources Management Conference to be held in Fort McMurray in 2002.

- **produced** new information resources to help Alberta's workforce be skilled, productive, and self-reliant. The X-treme Safety: survival tips for rookies in the workplace booklet and poster promote workplace health and safety to young and inexperienced workers. The Change and Transition booklet and poster foster career resilience by promoting proactive attitudes and actions for Albertans to work effectively in the changing workplace.

- **amended** the School Act, so that the School Buildings Board becomes an advisory committee.

- **held** Walk the Talk Day to teach children about traffic safety tips and safe ways to walk to and from school. The children also learned about school bus safety.

- **entered** into a partnership with Alberta Forest Products Association which will contribute to the development of a safety training CD ROM. Through the use of technology, this project will ensure that safety training is accessible to all members of the industry regardless of location and literacy levels.

- **partnered** with the Alberta Science Foundation to help young Albertans understand the role that environmental monitoring plays in public safety and energy development in Alberta.

- **promoted** Canada Career Week activities and the importance of career planning and life long learning.

- **continued** the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI), which has involved teachers, parents, students and administrators. This extensive and innovative program has helped develop new ideas and approaches to improved learning in more than 700 AISI projects across Alberta, ranging from early literacy initiatives to stay in school or small class size projects.

- **facilitated** eight training and employment initiatives involving over 150 Aboriginal people in 2001 to increase the employment of Aboriginal people in resource industries.

- **launched** the Sixties exhibition at the Provincial Museum of Alberta, the largest exhibition on the 1960s presented by a North American museum. The exhibition includes the Canadian premiere of Linda McCartney's *Sixties, A Portrait of an Era*, and the world premiere of The Beatles, *Backstage and Behind the Scenes*. Since its opening, 40,000 visitors have attended the exhibition.

- **launched** LearnAlberta.ca, a new website which will enhance what students are learning in the classroom with resources such as curriculum-based concept lessons and a comprehensive Online Reference Centre.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

People from all over Canada come to Alberta to make a better life for their children and themselves. The opportunities in this province are endless.

Every Government ministry is responsible to Albertans to create an atmosphere where families can succeed and flourish. This Quarter the Alberta Government continued to support families through a diverse range of initiatives. The Uniting for Children 2001 Children's Forum held in Calgary, chaired by Colleen Klein, allowed for stakeholders to gather and discuss issues affecting Alberta's children and youth.

The Alberta Government funds and encourages many other programs and initiatives that support children and families. This quarter the Government:

- **hosted** the National Aboriginal Youth Conference in Edmonton. One hundred and fifty Aboriginal youth from across Canada attended, along with provincial, territorial, and federal officials, to identify priority issues and discuss the National Aboriginal Youth Strategy.
- **awarded** approximately $1.1 million to 32 Alberta community-based non-profit organizations through the Wild Rose Foundation quarterly grant program to support community programs and projects.
- **coordinated** a feasibility study for a proposed Youth Apprenticeship Project.
- **transferred** 7.5 acres of land (valued at $1.7 million) and approved up to $1 million annually from the Private Landlord Rent Supplement Program to assist the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in building a new $20 million, 180 unit social housing complex.
- **awarded** Energize Recreation Volunteer Recognition Awards to four Albertans, acknowledging their volunteer efforts and outstanding contributions to the overall development of recreation in Alberta.
- **hosted** a Youth Workshop in the northeast and northwest regional offices to examine strategies for increased youth participation in the workforce.
- **provided** approximately $3.8 million in housing support to low and moderate income seniors.
- **provided** approximately $8.9 million through the Private Landlord Rent Supplement Program, Provincial Homelessness Initiative and grants to community social housing programs to provide basic shelter to those Albertans most in need.

- **established** the Judicial Dispute Resolution program to be made available in Edmonton's provincial family courts. This alternative dispute resolution process provides applicants with the opportunity to resolve their matter without the time, cost, and conflict of a trial associated with a traditional law suit.

- **began** the Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB) promotional campaign in order to raise awareness of the ACHB program among low-income Albertans and attract more program registrants.

- **launched** the "My Alberta" contest for children and youth aged five to 16. Through the contest, young people were invited to create a piece of artwork or write a 250-word essay answering the question, "What are my hopes and dreams for Alberta's future?"

- **approved** approximately 2,700 applications from seniors under the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program for a total expenditure of approximately $6.4 million.

- **launched** the Dispute Resolution Officer Pilot Project in Calgary to provide new services to those involved in child support and other family law disputes. The project will help save legal costs for the litigants, while providing advice to those who can't currently afford to pursue changes to child support orders in court and a quick way to settle other matters such as custody and access disputes.

- **provided** several hundred toys through the Offender Toy Making Program. Offenders in the Calgary and Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centres make wooden toys that are given to charities that auction them off to raise funds for their programs.

- **invited** Albertans to provide their views on the Child Welfare Act through a new website or by telephone as part of the Act's review.

- **provided** additional employment incentives through the National Child Benefit reinvestment funds to recipients of Supports for Independence (SFI), by increasing the earning exemption for parents and working teenagers and providing an annual work maintenance benefit for working parents.

- **provided** clarification regarding the treatment of annuities and structured settlements under the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program. The changes ensure benefits go to those who need them most.

BUILDING STRONGER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES

Albertans take pride in their homes and communities. Every community is made up of its own unique characteristics.

The Alberta Government is dedicated to ensure that neighbourhoods all over the province are strong and safe. This quarter, for the first time, Jasper residents got to elect a mayor and a local council during municipal elections. Also, under the Municipal Sponsorship Program $450,000 was provided to 235 fire departments to offer programs through the Alberta Fire Training School.

These actions acknowledge the Government's efforts to enhance safety for all residents of this province. During the Third Quarter, the Government:

- **reviewed** and tightened security and emergency response plans in Alberta following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. This work is part of a comprehensive review undertaken by the Ministerial Task Force on Security.

- **appointed** a security advisor to provide expertise on security and crisis management and updated Albertans on the province's security and emergency preparedness through a media technical briefing.

- **participated** in discussions on coordinating security of crucial infrastructure in western Canada and the western United States at a Pacific Northwest Economic Region meeting.

- **approved** more than $12 million in grants for municipalities under the Municipal Sponsorship Program. The grants funded a variety of municipal projects such as emergency services equipment, solar energy systems for heating municipal buildings, a global positioning system for ambulances and graders, and fire truck replacements.

- **funded** disaster services training for 41 municipalities and 22 ground search and rescue groups from $500,000 allocated under the Municipal Sponsorship Program.

- **launched** the "If In Doubt, Check It Out" seniors fraud awareness campaign to help seniors identify and avoid being victims of fraud.

- **enacted** the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Act that streamlines the process through which victims can regain their stolen property or obtain court-ordered restitution, without the time and financial costs of a normal civil law suit.

- **gained** $42.8 million worth of projects through The Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program (ICAP) in 53 communities during the third quarter. ICAP is jointly funded by federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Projects approved included: municipal water and wastewater system upgrades, municipal roads, bridges and transit, affordable housing, solid waste disposal and recycling, tourism, cultural, or recreation facilities and projects to improve energy efficiencies of municipal buildings.

- **introduced** appropriate security measures at Government of Alberta buildings to protect workers and visitors. The Security Operations Branch is also taking part in cross-government and key private sector security initiatives.

- **distributed** consumer alerts to caution Albertans on unscrupulous businesses and provide tips on dealing with a variety of situations in the marketplace.

- **signed** a 10-year lease to accommodate the Alberta Court of Appeal in Calgary.

- **completed** 582 investigations related to consumer protection, recovered more than $200,000 for Alberta consumers, and laid 256 charges.

- **assisted** in administering the 2001 municipal elections, which saw 1,919 members of local government elected in Alberta municipalities.

- **unveiled** the Volunteer Wall of Fame in the pedway of the Alberta Legislature. The Volunteer Wall of Fame recognizes and honours volunteers who make a difference in the lives of Albertans.

- **established** the Infrastructure Safety Unit to assess security risks on government owned and leased buildings, highways, bridges, and associated structures to maintain and improve the safety of government employees and the public in government infrastructure.

- **led** the provincial Government's Business Resumption Planning Initiative for 26 government departments and agencies. This will ensure Albertans continue to be served by an effective and accountable Government in the event of an emergency or disaster.

- **worked** in partnership with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association to coordinate the Energize workshops, which provided educational opportunities in key recreation topics, for approximately 380 community officials in attendance.

- **established** an office for the Peerless Lake Community Association to assist in pursuing economic and employment opportunities with industry.

- **reviewed** Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports for TransAlta Centennial and Epcor GP3, both of which are applying to expand capacity of their plants.

- **began** work on sour gas well, pipeline, and facility approval processes to encourage improved regional planning of sour gas infrastructure, reduce the impact on the environment, and address public safety issues.

- **awarded** 12 grants totaling $250,725 through the Human Rights Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund.

- **issued** H.B.A. Consultants Ltd., operating as Dominion Chrome Industries, a $50,000 global penalty in provincial court for two charges under regulations to Alberta's Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. In addition to a $10,000 fine, a creative sentence order in the amount of $40,000 was issued for charges relating to improper handling of hazardous waste. Under terms of the creative sentence, the company is required to develop several management and containment programs to ensure they exceed all provincial standards for waste storage and disposal.

- **continued** to work with federal officials to ensure the interests of Alberta are incorporated into planning for the G8 Summit in Kananaskis in June 2002.

- **reviewed** the Grand Cache Coal Company Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report proposing to develop two pits and coal processing facilities on property of the former Smoky River Coal Mine.

- **enacted** amendments to the Victims of Crime Act, which change the structure of the Criminal Injuries Review Board. The changes enhance the focus on innocent victims of crime in Alberta and allow the board to deal with appeals more efficiently.

- **established** a Regional Groundwater Management committee, headed by The Town of Edson and Yellowhead County. The committee is responsible for ensuring that the long-term sustainability of the Edson and area groundwater supply.

- **established** the Provincial/Municipal Council on Roles and Responsibilities in the 21st Century. The council will develop a process for resolving issues and help clarify the roles and responsibilities of provincial and municipal government.

PROTECTING ALBERTA'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

From mountain ranges to vast plains to vibrant cities, Alberta is recognized around the world for its awe-inspiring natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. Albertans take pride in their history, and want it preserved for future generations.

In recognition of this worthy goal, the Alberta Government has formed valuable partnerships with organizations that can help us protect and care for our natural and cultural heritage.

To ensure that natural places and special memories are protected, the Alberta Government performed the following activities during Third Quarter of this year. It:

- **announced** the continued operation of the Swan Hills Treatment Centre as a public service to maintain and strengthen Alberta's position as a leader in removing hazardous waste from the environment.
- **executed** a Protocol Agreement with the Siksika Nation, in which Alberta and Siksika agreed to enter into negotiations regarding a wide range of issues of mutual interest.
- **enhanced** the ecological integrity of La Biche River Wildland Provincial Park through a land exchange agreement with Corridor Pipeline Limited.
- **continued** to work with highway maintenance partners and Environment Canada officials through the Transportation Association of Canada to better manage road salt and protect the environment.
- **facilitated** a meeting between Athabasca oilsands developers and the Alberta Government to discuss provincial involvement in the agreement between the developers and the Athabasca Tribal Council representing First Nations in northwest Alberta.
- **wrote and published** a Guide to Aboriginal Organizations in Alberta. The directory contains a comprehensive listing of Aboriginal organizations including cultural, educational, and other organizations.
- **announced** the beginning of the nomination period for induction into the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame, the highest honour bestowed upon Albertans involved in agriculture, food, and rural development. Also, inducted two volunteer 4-H leaders into the 4-H Hall of Fame.

- **developed** and held two pilot workshops for staff in support of the Aboriginal Policy Initiative, on Aboriginal cultural sensitivity training. Additional training seminars scheduled for final quarter of 2001-2002.

- **awarded** grants totaling $622,056 to organizations and individuals involved in the preservation and interpretation of Alberta's heritage through the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

- **worked** successfully with six Aboriginal Councils to resolve concerns about energy resource development.

- **recognized** the historical significance of three industrial buildings located at EPCOR's Rossdale Plant site in Edmonton. The province designated the 1938-54 Low Pressure Plant, 1931 Administration Building and the 1937 Pumphouse No. 1 as Provincial Historic Resources.

- **signed** the Eco Plan Framework Agreement in partnership with the Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association. This agreement deals with environmental issues as they pertain to highway construction.

IMPROVING EFFICIENCY AND INNOVATION

Albertans have worked hard to establish our province as a leader in technology and innovation. In the Third Quarter, numerous awards were presented to individuals and organizations in Alberta who have demonstrated leadership in the areas of technology and innovation. The Government of Alberta recognized the importance of educating Albertans in this area. A perfect example is the *Technology for Success* trade show which the Government sponsored this year. The symposium showcases local technology firms involved in research, development, and commercialization.

In the Third Quarter of the 2001-02 fiscal year the Government also:

- **amended** the Builder's Lien Act to extend the time for filing liens from 45 days to 90 days for sectors specifically relating to oil and gas drilling and services. This better reflects payment practices that are unique to that industry.

- **developed** the Electronic Permitting System to help municipalities and the province better administer the building code and other codes regulating the construction of buildings, equipment, and facilities.

- **sponsored** the annual ASTech Awards, honouring Alberta's top achievers in science and technology. Specifically, this Government took an active role in ensuring the continuation of the Leaders of Tomorrow category.

- **co-hosted** the bi-annual meeting of Federal and Provincial Government Regional Directors, an ongoing forum that provides opportunities to identify ways of enhancing efficiency and innovation in northern Alberta.

- **launched** two new awards: the Innovation Award and the Teamworks Award. The Innovation Award recognizes employees or teams who create or adapt a process, technique, product or service that yields measurable results in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, or improved service. The Teamworks Award recognizes project teams for achieving an outstanding level of performance and focuses on how the group operates as a team.

- **processed** nearly 85% of the approximately 5,900 Farm Income Disaster Program applications received for the 2000 claim year, a significant improvement over the 58% of the claims processed at the same time last year.

- **appeared** before the House of Commons Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, to present Alberta's views on proposed federal legislation regarding the implementation of land claim settlements and to press for future federal legislative action.

- **sponsored** the Alberta E-Business Leadership Awards, recognizing the successful implementation of e-business tools and techniques and promoting electronic business in Alberta.

- **purchased** a contract administration management system (CMAS) that will become the base system for all departments. This new system will help ensure Government meets its commitment for high quality services, accurate reporting on results, strict timelines, and clear contracting terms.

- **met** with representatives of Aboriginal Land Claims counterparts from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba to deal with issues such as land claims and self-government negotiations.

- **launched** oil and gas industry preparations for the Internet-based Petroleum Registry of Alberta that will streamline industry reporting to Government and between industry partners.

- **collaborated** with industry stakeholders to launch the Alberta Livestock Industry Development Fund, which will support research and development in Alberta's livestock industry.

- **paid** $2.7 million to about 3,000 applicants under the Agriculture Income Disaster Program for the 1999 claim year.

- **developed** the Diversion Project with a number of partners. The goal of the project is to have eligible persons with serious mental illness, who commit minor, low risk offences receive immediate and accessible care as an alternative to incarceration.

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